

http://www.state.in.us/fssa/first_step

LOG ON & CHECK US OUT!

We are online and in touch, sharing information with providers, parents, and other interested individuals who want to know more about Indiana's Early Intervention System. We're always updating our web site with information about First Steps and its eligibility requirements ... state updates such as local and federal legislative issues ... and new policy information. You'll also find articles and information from the latest edition of KIDSteps Magazine.

We invite you to find answers to your questions, explore our links to other early intervention sites, learn about early intervention credentials, and discover a world of training opportunities through the Unified Training System, the ICC and the LPCC.

Join us online – we're just a click away!



We have
changed
our name!

First Steps and Children's Health Services have teamed up to better promote early intervention and education for children. As a result, First Steps Magazine is now KIDSteps Magazine – a publication dedicated to improving the lives of Hoosier families and children.



First Steps
Indiana Children's
Special Health Care Services

KIDSteps Magazine is a quarterly publication of First Steps/Indiana Children's Health Care Services, Indiana's Early Intervention System for Infants, Toddlers and Their Families.

**SPECIAL ISSUE ON:
TRANSITION**



Family & Social Services Administration
Division of Family & Children
Bureau of Child Development
402 W. Washington Street, Room W-386
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2739
(800) 441-7837



BULK RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO 760
FORT WAYNE IN

THIS MAGAZINE'S MISSION

The mission of this quarterly publication is to offer useful information to families, providers, service coordinators, medical professionals, and others who have special interest in the successes and challenges of early intervention and early childhood development in Indiana and neighboring states.

Thanks for picking up this "first" issue of KIDSteps Magazine.

While the format has not changed from First Steps Magazine, the new name reflects an exciting partnership opportunity between First Steps and the Children's Health Services division of the Indiana Department of Health. In many ways, this edition is a transition to the next level of early intervention awareness and education as we continue working together to support and educate all families in becoming healthy families.

"Transition" is the operative word this issue, as we explore the spirit and systematic approach behind Indiana's State Transition Team. The transition initiative is building stronger bridges for children and families as they move through the process of First Steps early identification and intervention onto preschool and into the mainstream of development and learning. A successful transition system is a collaborative effort among parents, providers, teachers, school administrators, and State-level policy-makers. The Team's mission is to help communities realize and treat transition as a system, rather than a series of events.

Transition systems are gaining momentum and success throughout Indiana. Johnson and Gibson counties are in the early stages of transition system development, and Marion County First Steps has developed a transition video and accompanying handbooks for service coordinators and parents. This issue will help you learn how your community can implement a more effective transition system. Our special thanks to Mary Jo Paladino, State Transition Coordinator, Ann Ruhmkorff of Marion County First Steps, Sheron Cochran with the Special Education Division of IDE, and Kate Swartzel for contributing to these articles.

You'll also meet Nathan Hawkins – an energetic boy who has made the transition out of First Steps and is striving to overcome his own developmental impairments. Thanks to his parents, Dinah and Grayling Hawkins, for sharing Nathan's story.

We invite you to read the insights and information here, then join us in our efforts to promote the successes and fight the challenges of early childhood intervention. We remain committed to improving the lives of Indiana families and children.

Maureen H. Greer

Maureen Greer
Assistant Deputy Director,
Bureau of Child
Development,
First Steps

INDIANA KIDSteps MAGAZINE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FAMILY IN THE SPOTLIGHT: NATHAN HAWKINS	3
TRANSITION	4-6
CHILDREN'S SPECIAL HEALTH SERVICE . .	7
MARION COUNTY CONFERENCE	8
PROVIDER	9
ICC/BBB	10
RESOURCES	11
WEB SITE	BACK PAGE

Published by Indiana's First Steps Early Intervention System, Bureau of Child Development, Division of Family and Children, Family and Social Services Administration.

James M. Hmurovich, Director, Division of Family and Children, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

Maureen Greer, Assistant Deputy Director, Bureau of Child Development, First Steps

Christa Holloway, BCD Staff Consultant

Graphic design and editorial services:
Asher Agency



FAMILY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATHAN

The Hawkins family: Benjamin, Dinah, Grayling, and Nathan

From the very first moment, expect to be captivated by Nathan Hawkins' charm. His naturally sociable personality illuminates his eyes and smile, only to be outmatched by his zest to do as much as possible on any given day. Upon first sight, most individuals would never know the path Nathan has traveled or the challenges that his (almost) unconquerable energy encounters daily.

Nathan is mildly mentally retarded and learning to overcome his developmental delays in speech and sensory motor skills. Nathan's mother, Dinah, is a trained occupational therapist with experience in working with preschool-age children, so she quickly recognized the signs of Nathan's developmental delays. In November 1999, she enrolled Nathan into a First Steps speech program. For the first six months, there seemed to be no signs of improvement. He communicated his wants and needs through signs and pictures, not the normal sounds or speech of a two year old.

But by the following June, Dinah and her husband, Grayling, were seeing progress. Nathan was beginning to discover a whole new world of communication through his ability to imitate sounds, develop a vocabulary, put words together and express himself. His routine of compulsive behavior is becoming more structured, and he is learning what his capabilities really are.

Nathan turned three in September, "aging-out" of First Steps and making the transition into a self-contained preschool for two to three days a week. The self-contained classroom is a small, intimate

program that offers Nathan a concentrated learning opportunity to do more directed activities, including integrated listening – a form of intervention that uses sounds and music to help Nathan improve his speech. The Hawkins took Nathan's transition seriously, observing the classroom and establishing open lines of communication between his former and current environments. Dinah quickly notes that Nathan's integration into a classroom is being further enhanced by the chance to learn language and social skills from other children, a very important step in his own development.

Fortunately, Nathan has a very loving, involved and supportive family. Dinah's education and experience in occupational therapy coupled with Grayling's abilities as a music teacher offer Nathan and his brother, Benjamin, tremendous developmental opportunities. The Hawkins adopted Nathan as a baby and soon learned they were expecting Benjamin, making the boys just under 12 month's difference in age. "They're like a couple of bear cubs," laughs Dinah, "and Nathan is a very affectionate little boy. He loves to be outdoors and in the water. At age three, he's already doing laps in the pool."

Nathan's transitions through adoption, First Steps, self-contained classroom therapy and on into school are not unconquerable challenges. With every new level of learning, he better understands his own abilities and is developing his speech, language, and sensory skills. For Nathan, every step is new opportunity to explore and conquer his environment.

TRANSITION: HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Change is an inevitable part of life – the root of growth and progress. Yet, change isn't always easy, especially for families with young children. Often times, the transitions from one environment to another can be intimidating and uncertain, and from a child's perspective, transition can be a major issue.

What exactly is transition? Transition involves a process of movement from one environment to another – change into, within and from programs or services that brings new opportunities and challenges for staff, families and children. There can be many types of transition. For families with children in early childhood programs, changes typically occur in:

- environment, such as movement from hospital to home, early intervention to preschool, preschool to Kindergarten, Kindergarten to First Grade, private program to public program or agency;
- curriculum style and structure between programs, classrooms, and teachers or therapists;
- program, classroom, or therapeutic philosophy; and
- teachers and staff.

As a child and family move from the current environment to a new one, the transition is often challenged by any number of issues, such as accurate and timely information transfer, limited openings, or quality training. Often the missing link is involvement by ALL of a transition's stakeholders, including schools, Head Start, First Steps, child care providers, service providers, therapists, and family members. In truth, successful transitions merge a systematic process to help ensure and reassure children and families of a smoother move between and among the various agencies, participants, and programs.

"Traditional thinking has placed transition as an event or a 'series of events' rather than a system that administratively supports and helps prepare children, families and staff," explains Mary Jo Paladino, Indiana's State Transition Coordinator. "We need to think of transition in the context of system. This system involves community agencies like First Steps, Head Start, schools, child care, families and others working together to develop a vision for transition and to plan transition services that are congruent across service providers within the community."

Successful transition system development should involve an interagency system that assesses the transition needs of the whole community, while ensuring the successful movement of children and families between and among agencies through interagency policies and procedures. Transition success relies upon the collaborative relationships between agencies and individual participants within the community that foster understanding and agreement on key transition issues, activities, procedures and formalization of agreements. As these collaborative relationships develop and more time is invested, the opportunities for successful transition outcomes for families and children increase.

There are some basic principles that guide successful transition system development. They include:

- Letting the vision drive the system.
- Building a transition system that integrates existing structures and systems.
- Keeping it simple. The system can be comprehensive and effective, yet simple.
- Understanding that resolving "old" needs and problems may create new ones.

When transition system development begins, there are several key issues to remember:

- Transition involves process.
- Strategies to promote interagency collaboration are essential.
- Strategies that support and promote change must be included.
- Systems should be responsive to the community vision and the current reality of the agencies.
- Agreement is an outcome of collaboration.
- Stakeholder involvement (staff, families) is critical to successful system development.
- Development of systems requires time and commitment.
- Mechanisms for training and technical assistance related to the new system are essential.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the system should be conducted on a regular basis.
- There are various approaches to system design work. There is not one "right way."
- There needs to be a written plan to make systems development a reality.

TAKING STEPS TO A TRANSITION SYSTEM

Every agency that serves young children – with or without disabilities – faces issues related to the movement of the child and family from the current environment to a new environment. As the number and type of provider agencies changes and grows based upon new entitlement programs, changes in regulations, and new state level planning, it is time to begin thinking about transition in a new way.

Change at the local level must be supported and facilitated at a state level. In 1999, Indiana began by forming a state level transition team whose purpose is to assist in developing, coordinating and implementing activities that enhance and facilitate a community's ability to provide seamless transition from one service provider or environment to another for children, ages birth through first grade. The Team's vision is a comprehensive, community-wide system – rather than a series of events in a child's life. This system ensures positive and effective transition experiences. The Team is looking at ways to help communities with training and technical assistance and ways the various agencies involved can work better together. The focus for 2000 is threefold as they strive to:

- Make communities aware of the State Transition Team and transition process for children with disabilities;

- Provide interested communities with training and follow-up technical support to assist transitions within their communities; and
- Evaluate the impact of the transition process for infants, young children, and families.

The catalyst for developing a state level transition team and local community transition teams is the STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in Public Schools) Model. Project STEPS is an outreach project housed at the University of Kentucky and designed to provide training and technical assistance to states and communities in the development of transition systems.

First Steps and the Indiana Department of Education Division of Special Education are jointly funding the transition initiative. Through STEPS orientation presentations and community Interagency Transition System Self-assessments, the transition initiative helps Indiana communities identify and train community transition teams to work on local transition systems.

The STEPS Model identifies four critical components for implementing an effective transition system: administration, staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation.

1. Administration – Interagency Coordination and Policy Development. The administrative component includes both getting the job done (process) and getting along with others (interagency coordination). It creates the atmosphere of cooperation needed for transition and coordinates the other three STEPS Model components related to the child, family and staff. This structure involves interagency coordination between the sending and the receiving agency(ies). It answers the transition questions of who, what, when, where, why and how, and it involves the development of:

- chains of command within participating agencies;
- an effective vehicle for communication and problem solving;
- clarification of roles and responsibilities of participants at both administrative and instructional levels;
- timeline for the transition process;
- operational procedures which should be institutionalized within an area or participating agencies;
- forms and other documentation;
- staff training and parent involvement in activities related to transition;
- mechanisms for programmatic/curricula continuity;
- strategies for record keeping and sending;
- procedures for referral, evaluation, preparation, placement and follow-up on both child and system level.

An effective administrative structure serves several purposes. It shows support at the top, setting a tone of interagency partnership. It provides systematic guidelines for how the

process will work, thereby, keeping the process organized. It establishes channels and procedures for ongoing communication and problem solving. In this way, the administrative structure is able to respond and adapt to various legal, funding and programmatic changes that impact transition. This, transition becomes a continually evolving process, helping to insure its appropriateness and relevance to local needs.

2. Staff involvement includes teachers, therapists, service providers, and school administrators. Though skills and information needed for transition may vary in terms of specific content required by staff, there are basic needs common to all staff involved in transition. These are:

- skills for working with families;
- interpersonal and group dynamic skills;
- knowledge of other agencies' programs, terminology, criteria for service eligibility, strengths and constraints;
- skills in child assessment and instruction relevant to developmental and transition needs;
- knowledge of transition policies, procedures and timelines.

An ongoing and varied approach should be in place for orienting new staff and updating returning staff. This insures that all staff have the skills, information, materials and support needed to make transition work effectively for children and families.

3. Family involvement is a key factor for the successful transition of young children from one agency to another. The STEPS Model strives to increase active and effective family participation in the educational process of their children and to facilitate an early linkage of families to the next educational agency. Because every family's needs are different, the STEPS Model offers a variety of levels of participation. Collaboration between infant and toddler, preschool and public school programs results in a community-wide effort that benefits families as they participate in the transition process. Families have the prerogative of selecting the options they feel will be most beneficial; however, families are encouraged to participate in as many options as feasible.

4. Naturally, a child's preparation is the primary focus of transition. The transition system specifically helps all participants prepare a child for his or her next environment, working with both the sending and receiving agencies, and conducting follow up activities to determine success.

Individual planning for each child helps facilitate a successful transition from one program to another. Preparing a child's transition and adjustment might include:

Continued on page 6

TRANSITION: HELPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Continued from page 5

- staff and family knowledge of what skills are needed in the next environment;
- developing a systematic means for assessing the skills that help facilitate transition into the next environment;
- planning and implementing appropriate activities in the current environment related to the assessed skills;
- ongoing evaluation and monitoring of skills and making appropriate adjustments; and
- creating mechanisms for long and short term follow-up after transition to insure program continuity.

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITION SUCCESS

The Indiana Transition Initiative will support community transition teams through technical assistance and training. Community Transition Team efforts to work for congruent local systems can impact successful transition. The presence of interagency participants, staff, and family on community transition teams brings together the many perspectives under a single vision that guides local transition system development. The local transition system development efforts can support the teachers, staff, and families in successful transition experiences.

Teachers and staff can do many things to assist families as they prepare for important transitions in their children's lives.

Each family has different needs, and staff members can help the family identify those needs and develop a transition plan; provide families with a variety of options for gaining knowledge about programming and the transition process; provide information and strategies to assist families in preparing the child for transition; and develop procedures for linking families to needed supplemental services within the community.

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

The STEPS Model is already in progress in Gibson and Johnson counties. Indiana's State Transition Team is into its second full year of planning and process development to help other communities throughout Indiana improve transition systems. Much of their agenda includes tasks that will continue developing a statewide process for providing technical assistance to every community that chooses to work on transition systemically. Regional Transition Facilitators are available to present to First Steps Local Planning and Coordinating Councils, community transition teams or other interested community groups an orientation to the STEPS Model. Regional Transition Facilitators are also available to conduct a Transition System Self-Assessment to help a community evaluate its readiness to form a community transition team. The three day STEPS Model training can be scheduled by community transition teams based on completion of the Transition System Self-Assessment and the team's readiness to proceed with transition system development. The three day training is conducted by the State Transition Coordinator with support from Regional Transition Facilitators. The STEPS Model provides a framework from which to work as a community moves toward their goals of improved transition for every child.

TO LEARN MORE:

Parents, providers, teachers, administrators, and interested community groups or councils who wish to learn more about developing an effective child and family-focused transition system are encouraged to critically examine their current transition process and work with Indiana's State Transition Team on developing an effective transition system. For more information on how to get started, contact:

Mary Jo Paladino
State Transition Coordinator
16130 Brockton Court
Granger, IN 46530
(219) 273-6019
Email: mpaladin@iushb.edu

Transition strategies for working with children:

- Visit the child in his or her current program or in the home where he or she is comfortable.
- Ask the sending program and/or parents to provide information about familiar routines and objects for the child to have in the new program.
- Visit the new environment and ask questions.
- Provide the parents with a copy of the general schedule and when the best times are to call or visit.
- Offer a variety of options for families to be involved in the classroom.
- Establish methods of consistent communication with the family.
- Allow time for the child to visit the program or classroom before the first day of school.
- Define goals and objectives that address transition preparation and adjustment.
- Maintain contact with the child's previous teacher or program during the first few weeks.

Source: adapted from Spring 1993 PLAY, Mississippi State DOE Special Services.

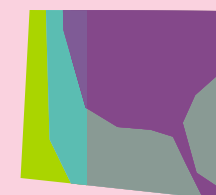
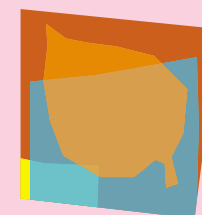
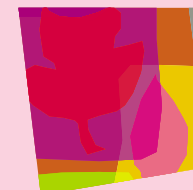
UPDATE:

"Making The Connection" VIDEO SERIES

In the summer issue of *First Steps Magazine*, we introduced you to a physician and staff continuing medical education video kit that describes First Steps Early Intervention (FS) and Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS). The video is a four-part series that features several families who have received First Steps and Children's Special Health services.

Currently, the SPRANS Grant* staff is working with FS and CSHCS state consultants to determine the most effective and efficient method to distribute this video packet. The primary target audience consists of pediatricians and family practice physicians that currently are not making referrals to FS and CSHCS programs and also are not serving as providers for either program. There are limited numbers of video packets; distribution to the primary target audience is planned within the next few months.

SPRANS (Special Projects of Regional and National Significance) is a four-year federal grant begun in 1998, that involves Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) and First Steps Early Intervention (FS) in an initiative that strives to provide more cost effective services from state agencies with less duplication.



JOIN THE INDIANA ASSOCIATION FOR INFANT AND TODDLER MENTAL HEALTH

The Indiana Association for Infant and Toddler Mental Health (IAITMH) is looking for individuals, family members, students, caregivers, professionals, agencies and others who are concerned about young children and mental health issues to join them in raising the level of awareness about infant and toddler mental health.

IAITMH strives to actively advocate, promote, educate, and influence mental health issues regarding infants and toddlers on a local, state, national, and international level. Members play a critical role in the development and implementation of a variety of infant and toddler mental health initiatives through a large membership network.

To learn more, write or call:

**Indiana Association for
Infant and Toddler Mental Health**
55 Monument Circle, Suite 455
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 638-3501



MARION COUNTY FIRST STEPS INTRODUCES TRANSITION VIDEO AND PARENT AND SERVICE COORDINATOR HANDBOOKS

Beginning in 1997, Marion County First Steps Transition Committee collaborated with 11 school systems and Marion County First Steps providers to create a transition-focused video and parent and service coordinator handbooks. The project's mission is to provide transition training and parent preparation as their child moves from First Steps into the public school system and coordinate consistent information from all sources.

The committee included Marion County First Steps providers, council members, and public preschool liaisons to develop a script outline and ideas for filming. A professional writer provided the final script and narration along with Indianapolis Public Schools which provided in-kind services from their audio-visual department.

The video provides the viewer with a structured look at the various aspects of transition and developmental preschool programs, including discussions on family rights, evaluation procedures, and eligibility for three to five year preschool services.

Marion County First Steps provides all of its service coordinators with the "Service Coordinators Handbook," a copy of the video, and a supply of parent handbooks. Service coordinators receive transition training annually, and quarterly Parent Transition meetings help explain the transition system to parents.

Marion County First Steps offers all Indiana First Steps councils, schools, and agencies the opportunity to purchase the Transition Video and Handbooks for the cost of reproduction, shipping and handling. Currently, the video and handbooks are in reproduction to reflect the recent changes in the Article 7 rules and will be available in early 2001.

For additional information, contact:

Jane Mellinger, AVS, (317) 972-1206

Kyra Davis, Independent Service Coordinator, Transition Committee Chairperson, (317) 845-5108

Ann Ruhmkorff, Marion County First Steps Coordinator, (317) 257-2229

EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE: MARCH 2001

Parents and early intervention providers are invited to attend the State Early Childhood Partnership Conference, scheduled March 8-10 in Indianapolis. The conference is an opportunity for parents, early intervention and early childhood care and education providers to share best practices, learn new strategies and discuss current research for enhancing children's development. A preconference day on Thursday, March 8 will host 12 full or half-day learning opportunities. On both Friday and Saturday, 60+ breakout sessions along with noted Keynote presenters Dr. Lillian Katz and musician Al Russo ("Mr. Al" to thousands of children) will welcome over 3000 Early Childhood attendees. Other activities connected with the conference include a FREE evening concert with Mr. Al for families and providers and the Professional Development Fair on Saturday. The exhibit hall will host community resource booths as well as over 30 commercial exhibitors selling books, toys and materials for young children.

Parents wishing to attend this conference are encouraged to apply for financial assistance from their local First Steps Council or by contacting Gayle Foy at (317) 846-6457. Certain restrictions apply. Pre-Conference booklets will be mailed in early January or will be available at <http://www.iaeyc.org> after January 1st. A flyer will also be mailed to ALL First Steps families in early January.

Elizabeth K. Traub
Research Associate, The Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
The University Affiliated Program of Indiana
2853 E. 10th, Bloomington, IN 47408
(812) 855-6508
fax (812) 855-9630
etraub@indiana.edu
<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu>
Promoting strong families and communities for ALL children through education and research

THIS STORY IS THE NINTH IN AN ONGOING SERIES OF ARTICLES ABOUT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FIRST STEPS FAMILIES.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Contributed by Kate Swartzel,
First Steps Service Coordinator

Transition from First Steps to the school system is an important step for both families and service coordinators. With careful, advanced planning and preparation, the process can be an overall comfortable experience for everyone involved.

Preparation begins with transition discussions the day your child's first IFSP is written. When your child turns 18 months, your service coordinator will again discuss your child's transition and ask you to sign a release that informs the school system of your child's name and birthday, diagnosis if one is available, and special service requirements when he or she reaches age three. When your child reaches 30 months of age, a copy of his or her most recent IFSP and therapist(s) reports are provided to the appropriate school system. When your child is 33 months, your service coordinator will schedule a transition meeting with you, the school system and any First Steps therapist and current reports requested.

Early planning is a critical step in transition. One family, for example, requested to meet with school services staff and their First Steps service coordinator far in advance of their child's 33rd month to discuss transition options. Fortunately, the positive relationship between First Steps and that particular school system honored the parents' request. The family was then able to visit different sites where services for their child would be offered and gain a better understanding of each location and program. Advanced planning helped them make better decisions for their child's future needs.

By federal law, the school system will complete formal testing and schedule an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting prior to your child's third birthday. Results of the testing will help determine how the IEP is written with the school system team, First Steps service coordinator, and parents present. The IEP is the legal document that identifies the specific education needs and services that your child is eligible to receive, as well as the frequency and duration of services per month. If a parent believes that the IEP does not provide adequate services to meet his or her child's educational goals, the Parents Rights Handbook (provided by the school system) outlines the proper steps for addressing such grievances.

First Steps offers a wide variety of services to meet the developmental needs of your child. However, once a child makes the transition from First Steps to the school system, his or her educational needs become the primary focus. The services provided by the school system relate to those educational needs. While First Steps services are based on individual developmental treatment, most school system services are conducted in educationally-based group settings either in the child's current preschool location or in preschool groups run by the school system. Groups usually meet for a few hours per day, one to four days per week. The number and duration of these sessions depend on the child's educational needs and the school's history and beliefs about providing educational services. If the child's IEP includes individual therapies, the parent(s) may choose to bring the child to his or her public school for these appointments or use bussing services that are available. Families may choose to purchase additional services through insurance or Medicaid that are not provided in their child's IEP; however, these services are contracted through clinics or facilities outside of the school system.

Some school systems offer a transition class for children who will turn three years old during the current school year with anticipated needs beyond age three. Starting in the fall semester, this program allows a child to participate in a classroom setting with teachers, therapists, and peers. Families may ask that their child's First Steps therapist(s) work with the child during the transition class so the school staff can learn about the child's needs and strengths and which teaching methods work best for that child. This helps the child transition into the classroom setting and form relationships with his or her new school therapist and teachers.

Service coordinators and school system staff strive to make the transition process seamless. The goal of every child's transition is to ensure that each progressive level of services does not stop between First Steps developmental services and the school system's educational program. Transition is meant to be as comfortable as possible for each child and family.

Kate Swartzel is a First Steps Service Coordinator in St. Joseph County and has served as a transition counselor for more than five years within the First Steps Early Intervention system.

"Enhancing the choice of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families through community involvement."

The ICC held its annual retreat on October 12 and 13, 2000, setting the course for the ICC agenda in 2001. The first day focused on ICC values and vision for the First Steps system, prioritizing statewide system outcomes that will become the cornerstone of Indiana's early intervention evaluation system. This effort will develop a system that (1) is implemented locally throughout Indiana, (2) involves data collection as part of ongoing service routines, and (3) assesses the impact of First Steps services on families, children, and communities. More information will soon follow.

Task force updates and potential new topics and issues were discussed, and the ICC believes the current practice of organizing work groups around particular issues or work products has made the ICC more responsive and efficient. We plan to continue to coordinate task forces in this manner, and by early December, the ICC will solicit for work group members for the following task forces:

- **Diversity** – A continuation of the 2000 group, this task force will partner with the Indiana State Department of Health to conduct a cultural competency needs assessment and review methods of support for local councils around the diversity issues identified, including child find opportunities and other training options.

- **Public Awareness** – This task force intends to educate the early intervention community about legislative issues affecting young children with special needs, including First Steps issues, child care, pre-school education, and healthcare. This is a short-term group working primarily in the upcoming legislative session (January to April 2001) to gather information and recommend a position on relevant legislation to the ICC.

- **Family Support** – This is a pre-existing committee of family members and parents that reviews many family support issues, including the final stages of grant preparation for a pilot family support program intended to formalize the parent to parent connections needed in the First Steps system.

- **Quality Assurance** – The Outcomes Task Force from 2000 will evolve into the Indicators and Measurement Work Group as the first system outcomes will move to the next step in the First Steps evaluation process.

Other work groups will provide input to the Bureau of Child Development on a one-time, as needed basis. Please watch your mail for details about the various work groups that will need your assistance. If you would like to add your name to the list of people who will receive that information, you can contact ICC Staff Support Jan Bledsoe via phone

(317-894-0818) or email: jbledsoe@child-dev.com and give her your email or regular address information.

Two new appointments have been made to the ICC. We welcome Barbara Heffernan, parent from Kokomo, and Marilyn Redmon, Child Care Administrator from Lafayette.

The work product of the Legislative Task Force is now complete. If you would like a copy of the legislative survey and tips for communicating with legislators emailed or sent to you, please contact ICC Staff Support Jan Bledsoe at 317-894-0818 or email: jbledsoe@child-dev.com

S
E
C
R
E
T
S
O
F
F
I
C
E



COMING SOON! Indiana First Steps CD Rom of Art and Logos

Indiana's Early Intervention System for Infants, Toddlers, & Their Families is creating a CD that includes many of the whimsical cartoon illustrations, clip art, and logos that have become synonymous with Indiana First Steps. All art is four-color, but may be printed in black and white and are categorized by Animals, Icons, Medical, Seasons, Toys, Vehicles, and Logos.

The CD will be available to anyone involved with Indiana First Steps for use in Indiana First Steps-related materials and promotions, such as brochures, announcements, ads, promotions, and printed specialty products. Look for the CD to be listed on an updated version of the Specialty Order Form as soon as it is ready for distribution!

One note of legal guidance: any of the artwork on the disc may not be re-sold or distributed to a third party in any format. All logos, artwork and illustrations are property of Indiana First Steps and are licensed for use ONLY in the State of Indiana and only for First Steps materials.

CAR SEAT SAFETY HELPS MINIMIZE THE RISK OF INJURY

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" could not be truer when traveling with children. There is little worse than a child being seriously hurt, or even killed, especially if the injury could have been prevented. While dads (and moms) can't eliminate every risk to their children, there are many precautions that CAN minimize potential hazards.

When traveling by car, be sure that all family members are properly restrained in seat belts or child safety seats but keep in mind that car seats must be installed correctly to be effective. Each year, millions of parents unknowingly buckle their kids into improperly installed or recalled child safety seats. Here are a couple of statistics to consider:

- In a recent Reader's Digest Magazine analysis compiled from hundreds of car seat safety clinics across the United States, the percentage of improper installation was shocking. Of 23,000 car seats inspected, more than 20,000 seats (94%) were installed improperly.
- Almost one-third of children under age five who were killed while traveling in motor vehicles in 1997 were strapped in safety seats, but the majority of these seats

were not installed correctly. With proper car seat installation, some of these deaths could have been avoided. (source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

It's a smart idea for parents to have their child's car seat or booster seat inspected by a professional for defects and proper installation. Many communities sponsor car seat clinics at regular intervals. City police departments, county sheriff's departments, or the Indiana State Police can also conduct inspections, and some hospitals offer car seat inspections to the public. Call your local law enforcement agencies or medical facilities and have your child's car seat inspected TODAY!

Boot Camp is a class for dads with babies and dads expecting babies. For more information, call First Steps / Step Ahead of Wells County at 1-800-417-2774 or visit the Boot Camp website: <http://www.newdads.com>

Submitted by Bill Horan, Boot Camp Coach.



BOOT CAMP

SIGN ME UP

I am interested in subscribing:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

() Please add me to the mailing list for a single copy sent to the address above. (Single subscriptions are available free to families, providers, First Steps staff, and interested individuals.)

() I would like to distribute copies to a group or organization. Please send _____ copies to the above address. (Multiple copies are available for a small additional shipping and handling charge.)

Send your subscription request to
First Steps Magazine
c/o Post Masters, Attn: Michelle
2826 South Calhoun St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46807

Each child grows and changes at a different rate.

I might do some activities earlier than others. Playing with me helps me learn new things. If you are concerned about what I do, talk to my doctor or nurse, or call the local **First Steps** office. Call 1-800-441-7837 if you don't know the local First Steps number.

At 5-6 months, watch for me to:

- pick up my head and chest when I am on my stomach.
- I can hold myself up with my arms.
- stand up if you hold me under my arms.
- roll from my stomach to my back or from my back to my stomach.
- notice small things like Cheerios if they are placed in front of me.
- lie on my back and look at my hands. I can bring my hands together over my chest or at my mouth.
- reach for toys or other interesting things that are near me.
- squeal and make high-pitched sounds when I am happy.
- start to have my teeth come in.

